Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A resource allocation method for a communication network having at least one gateway user connected to the network via at least one gateway access terminal and at least one non-gateway user, comprising:

identifying said at least one gateway access terminal;

obtaining a data backlog size of said at least one gateway access terminal; and

selectively raising the priority of at least one gateway access terminal based on the data backlog size.

2. (Original) The resource allocation method of claim 1, wherein the raising step is conducted if the data backlog size of said at least one gateway access terminal is above a predetermined threshold.

3. (Original) The resource allocation method of claim 1, wherein said at least one gateway access terminal comprises a plurality of gateway access terminals, and wherein the raising step comprises raising the priority of the gateway access terminal having the largest data backlog size.

4. (Currently Amended) The resource allocation method of claim 3, further comprising:

comparing the largest data backlog size with a smallest data backlog size among said plurality of gateway access terminals; and

raising the priority of the gateway access terminal having the largest data backlog size if the largest data backlog size is at least a predetermined multiple of the smallest data backlog size; and

~~maintaining the priority of the gateway access terminal if the largest data backlog size is less than the predetermined multiple of the smallest data backlog size.~~

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5. (Original) The resource allocation method of claim 3, wherein the raising step comprises:

comparing data backlog sizes for at least two of said plurality of gateway access terminals; and

assigning relative priorities for said at least two gateway access terminals based on the relative data backlog sizes of said at least two gateway access terminals.

6. (Original) The resource allocation method of claim 3, further comprising:

updating the data backlog size after at least one of said plurality of gateway access terminals transmits data; and

repeating the identifying, obtaining, and selectively raising steps for said plurality of gateway access terminals.

7. (Cancelled)

8. (Original) The resource allocation method of claim 1, further comprising labelling the gateway access terminals as a special quality of service (QoS) class.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (New) The resource allocation method of claim 1, comprising

communicating between the at least one gateway access terminal and at least one user device; and

communicating between the at least one gateway access terminal and a base station of the communication network on behalf of the at least one user device.

11. (New) The resource allocation method of claim 1, wherein the gateway access terminal is configured to communicate with a base station of the communication network on behalf of one or more of a plurality of user devices that communicate with the gateway access terminal.

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12. (New) The resource allocation method of claim 1, wherein the data backlog size corresponds to a buffer size at the gateway access terminal.

13. (New) A communication resource allocation method, comprising:

determining whether an access terminal communicating with a base station of a communication network is a gateway access terminal that is configured to serve at least one user device;

determining whether an access terminal determined to be a gateway access terminal has a data backlog at the gateway access terminal; and

adjusting a priority of a gateway access terminal that has a data backlog and that satisfies a selected criteria.

14. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the selected criteria comprises a size of the data backlog being above a threshold that is at least one of

a predetermined amount or

an amount based at least in part on a data backlog at another gateway access terminal.

15. (New) The method of claim 14, comprising

raising the priority of the gateway access terminal if the data backlog size is above the threshold.

16. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the selected criteria comprises a gateway access terminal having a data backlog size that is greater than any other gateway access terminal communicating with the base station and

the method comprises raising the priority of the gateway access terminal having the largest data backlog size.

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17.   (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the selected criteria comprises a gateway access terminal having a data backlog size that is greater than any other gateway access terminal communicating with the base station and that is at least a selected multiple of a smallest data backlog size of the gateway access terminals communicating with the base station and

the method comprises one of

raising the priority of the gateway access terminal having the largest data backlog size if the largest data backlog size is at least the selected multiple of the smallest data backlog size; or

maintaining the priority of the gateway access terminal if the largest data backlog size is less than the selected multiple of the smallest data backlog size.

18.   (New) The method of claim 13, comprising

determining relative data backlog sizes for at least two gateway access terminals communicating with the base station; and

assigning relative priorities for said at least two gateway access terminals based on the relative data backlog sizes of said at least two gateway access terminals.

19.   (New) The method of claim 13, comprising:

determining an updated data backlog size for any gateway access terminals communicating with the base station after at least one of said gateway access terminals transmits data; and

repeating the adjusting step based upon the updated data backlog size.

20.   (New) The method of claim 13, wherein the selected criteria comprises the gateway access terminal serving at least two user devices and the method comprises raising a priority of the gateway access terminal only if the selected criteria is satisfied.

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21. (New) The method of claim 13, comprising:

determining whether resource usage of at least one gateway access terminal exceeds a hogger threshold; and

adjusting the priority of said at least one gateway access terminal if the resource usage exceeds the hogger threshold.

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